the Commemorative Trail

The newsletter of the Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins
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CONGRATULATIONS TO DON AND HELEN CARMODY FOR BEING THE FIRST NUMISMATIC HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM TO EACH STRIKE A CEREMONIAL COMMEMORATIVE COIN. THE ISSUE WAS THE 1988 DENVER OLYMPIC DOLLAR.

THEY ARE PICTURED IN FRONT OF THEIR CREATED MONTAGE, CONSISTING OF MEMENTOS FROM THE 1987 CONSTITUTION FIRST STRIKE CEREMONY, HELD AT THE PHILADELPHIA MINT. RAY MERCER IS SEEN GUARDING THE EXHIBIT. NOTE THE LOCATION OF HIS HANDS.

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
By: Bob Colby, D.D.S.

FIRST, A "SHORT FAIRY TALE"

Many years ago, "Mr. Good Guy" was born. He went to public school, then to high school and then college. "Mr. Good Guy" attended professional school and then spent and additional five years in hospitals learning and he learned a great deal.

This was a great time in our country because most people were "Mr. Good Guys." They were taught honesty, to be respectful, never to cheat... always to be the best you can.

"Mr. Good Guy" spent thirty one years doing good, working hard and as the years went by he was able to turn a penny into a nickel, then a dime, a quarter, a half dollar and then a dollar. "Mr. Good Guy" enjoyed his work, but something within him made him look for something else. He really didn't know what he was looking for.

One day "Mr. Good Guy" became interested in U.S. coinage. It is a very long story how this happened. The more he studied, the more he looked at coins, the many trips he made to ANA Seminars, the many courses he took, the many Coin Letters and books he read... the more he fell in love with coins and "Mr. Good Guy" throughout the years never once thought that there were "Mr. Bad Guys" out there staying up twenty four hours a day, never sleeping, just trying to find new and better ways to cheat him out of his hard earned pennies, nickels, and everything he had saved over thirty one years.

As "Mr. Good Guy" learned, he realized and soon found out that without a coin expert to help him, there was absolutely no way he would make it in the coin world. Once again, because of "Mr. Good Guy's" belief in other people, and the literature that was telling him that there were only a small number of cheats (also known as crooks, low lifes and a hundred other horrible adjectives) associated with the coin industry, "Mr. Good Guy" started to find what he thought were coin experts to help him. These coin experts(!!!!!!) were coin writers, well known dealers, and if you listened to what was told you about them and what you read about them, you would really think you were in the best company.

Soon "Mr. Good Guy" realized and he was by this time willing to put up a huge sum of money to prove the point that all those people with no exception that he encountered were just part of the 98%, yes I said 98% of the people out there who were stealing his pennies, nickels, dimes and "you name it."

Along came a name to him... "The Society for U.S. Commem Coins" and after a few years "Mr. Good Guy" found out that there were really some wonderful people out there who really wanted to help. It truly was in his mind a miracle. The Numismatic World changed for him. Now there was fun, enjoyment, excitement, knowledge and beautiful things were

happening for "Mr. Good Guy" and once again, even though there was only a small group out there, "Mr. Good Guy" was once again happy. What about all the "Bad Guys." It made very little difference now... As soon as all the "Bad Guys" found out they couldn't sell "Mr. Good Guy" any coins any more, believe it or not, none of them talked to him. In fact, "Mr. Good Guy" became the invisible man, just as if he never existed. Do you think they cared? Never... they knew they could replace him with another "Mr. Good Guy."

Just in case this is a true Fairy Tale and because I know there are many "Mr. Good Guys" out there let me say the following to you:

"Your Commem Society is the best thing in all Numismatics for you... All you have to do is support it, talk about it, try and find new members for it, (if you have a few extra dollars, contribute to the Society), attend meetings, but above all give your Society input and utilize the Society's experts to help you towards your Numismatic goals."

* *

The Commem Society received a late start when the new Officers took over. Bills were not sent out. It was the fault of your Officers, but forgive them all. Why? They have worked hard. The Commem Society had a meeting every month and is continuing to have monthly meetings all over the country.

We, as a Society, are known as the "BEST"! Anybody and everybody recognizes us. Let us all keep the Society strong. Send in your dues. Support the Society.

It is now time for everybody to think about running for Office for the 1988-89 year and send in to the Commem Trail the office you desire. You will receive support.

Now For a Personal Note

After almost two years of devoting so much time and effort to the Society I must call it quits. I will not be able to be an Officer this coming term. If I continued to take off so much time from my private practice I would very shortly be bankrupt. I want to thank everyone who has supported me and hope that I will be around to help the Society the best way I can. (signed) Dr. Bob Colby.

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VICE PRESIDENT MESSAGE

Charles J. Ricard #80, Historian & Librarian

The Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins was well represented at the striking ceremonies for the U.S. Constitution coinage. Invitations were sent by the Treasury Department to witness the striking of the 1988 Olympic Commemorative Coins, on May 2, 1988, at the Denver Mint.

These special events give you an excellent opportunity to start a conversation with perspective new members. Many that I meet tell me that the U.S. Commemorative Coin series is too expensive to pursue. This may be true for the choicest pieces, but how fortunate we are to have AU pieces and new issues, such as the George Washington commemorative half dollar, the Olympic, the Statute of Liberty, the U.S. Constitution, and the new 1988 Olympic issues. A modest investment in these new issues will provide an opportunity for a new member to start a modern series of U.S. Commemorative coins which can provide hours of enjoyment.

A SUSCC LIBRARY LIST has been prepared, and I will be pleased to send you a copy. Members may borrow from the list by paying the round trip postage. If you have a publication not listed that deals with some aspect of U.S. Commemorative coins, why not consider donating it.

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A LETTER FROM RAY MERCER

Just a quick note to comment upon Gloria Peter's article, 3,214 Hawaiians Melted! Although I must confess that I find the concept a rather romantic idea, I personally find the theory very hard to swallow.

Attached, please find several xerox copies to back up my belief. The first is dated Jan. 31, 1930 and is from Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Mellon. In this letter Mellon is basically trashing the entire Commemorative Program in order to get out of minting the proposed Spanish Trail. On Page 2, he happily list all the "returned to mint" issues along with their amounts/mintages.

Please note that the Captain Cook half is not mentioned on this list. I can only assume, since Mellon is certainly on the warpath in this letter, that the Hawaiian is overlooked because it was not returned to the mint - thus it was not a "failure" that Mellon could mention to support his stance against commemoratives. To additionally back up this theory, I have also attached a small xerox of Hoffecker's reply, dated March 8, 1930, to Mellon's negative comments.

Hoffecker plainly refers to the success of the Hawaiian's sales when he states, "Mr. Mellon does not mention the Hawaiian coin in his list, the only parrallel case with ours. They were sold in sixty days at two dollars and are worth seven fifty today."

All in all, I personally find it very hard to believe that the mintage is only 6,586. Of course, anything is possible, but I would like to see Mr. Robert Van Dyke's basis for this statement. I just don't believe it. (Signed) Ray Mercer.

CLUB NEWS
BY CINDY MOHON -- SECRETARY

At long last I may be able to get my notes to Anthony in time to relay some information about the membership, and the secretary's work. First things first--I wish to tell you that is is my great honor to serve as the Societ;y's secretary. I had a very slow start....and have had a number of problems which are finally being resolved in positive ways. It has been an exciting and eventful year for me. I have never before served as a secretary for any club function--and the S.U.S.C.C. is now a very big group to start with as a beginner. Unfortunately when a club's secretary has difficulties with the job, it's the membership which suffers. To those of you who may have suffered any inconvenience, please accept my apologies at this time. I also appreciate the consistent patience and support which you have all provided unfailingly.

I did get the renewal notices out to the general membership.....late, but successful, thanks to Helen Carmody's help. A large number of persons responded quickly to both the "frownie face" on the label of the TCT and to the notices. Many noble persons answered my appeal and paid their dues through August of '89! It is impossible for me to fully express my gratitude for the generosity of those members. The amount of work, bookkeeping, (and mailing costs) saved by the early payment is unbelievable to anyone who is unfamiliar with the secretarial function. For your reward -- I wish for those who paid early dues that your commemorative coins have the most wonderful "eye-popping" natural luster and tic-free surfaces.

Another problem was undiagnosed and unidentified until early May. It seems that inadvertently--and I really do not know how it happened--about 27 members (R-1387 to R-1414) were not being printed out by the computer's disk. Which means that those members were the "forgotten few" in terms of all mail-outs to the membership. The remedy has been applied. All of the person affected have been notified and will be able to enjoy the full year of membership to which they are entitled.

It isn't all bad news, by any means. The good news is that there is consistent interest in the Society; and we have averaged about 12 new members a month. This continued membership growth is largely due to the unflagging -- and seemingly tireless -- efforts by Helen and Don Carmody. Helen, as most of you know, recruits new members with the enthusiasm and zeal that truly reflects the sincerity of the Society's philosophy. Not only do the Carmodys continue to recruit, but they continue to serve the membership in every way possible. My thanks to everyone who has gone the "extra mile" to promote--and keep our wonderful membership!

Meetings have been held at the major shows, including the Long Beach Expo, F.U.N., Dallas, Central States, and the ANA Midwinter. A few meetings were well attended, but most had pretty poor turn-out. Please let the officers know why this is happening so that the membership can be better served. Notices did go out to members who live in the geographical areas where the meetings were to be held. These notices require considerable

effort and expense to the Society---so let us know what can be done which will improve attendance.

Many thanks to all of you who have generously donated money and items for mail bid. Not many of you have received the "THANKS" you deserve for this extra help for the Society. To mention a few (but not the only) contributors: Mr. Phil Rosso (R-351) went to a lot of time, effort and expense to obtain a very special item for the Society library. It was an autographed copy of the Swiatek/Breen "Encyclopedia of Silver and Gold Commemorative Coins." What a great gift! His thanks from me was that his "thank you" letter went to Jim Whelan (R-945) who had contributed a much appreciated $100.00 cash to the Society. It ended up that neither Jim nor Phil got the genuine thanks they really deserve for supporting the Society. At last a miniscule of recognition is righteously awarded to them both. THANKS, GUYS...and forgive me. As a secretary, I've got a long ways to go. Other persons have helped. Bob Ball (R-157) has contributed not only time and effort---but money ($100.00) which he gave to the Society in December. Jack Provost (R-991) has contributed in the club year, giving $50 in December and an earlier donation. Dr. Lyndon King (R-84) gives "until it hurts" on a regular basis. Tom Culhane (R-1103), Peter Shaffer (R-751)..... and others...keep the Society fired with fun and exciting items for mail bid. The other side of the mail bid--offering liberal amounts for the items--was also met by such persons as Douglas Jennings (R-283), Bob Mushen (R-1488), Dr. King and others. THANKS TO YOU ALL! AND THANKS TO ALL OF YOU THAT I HAVE SURELY FAILED TO RECOGNIZE!

With the membership's continued patience and support, I may be able to do this job until we get a real secretary back! By the way, I need you to know that without Helen Carmody's loyal and consistent assistance, we'd have been up a creek without a paddle this year. Thanks, Helen, from the depths of my heart!

OUR NUMISMATIC HERITAGE

By Helen L. Carmody (R-7, CA)

Just what would you do to record the most memorable event in your numismatic career? Although Don Carmody has been a coin collector for fifty-five years, starting at the age of seven, his biggest thrill was not handling his first $50 slug, nor his first set of patterns, nor his first proof Morgan dollar, nor even "pedigreed" commems, the area of numismatics in which he is most interested. Instead, it was being invited to last July's first-strike Constitution coin ceremonies at the Philadelphia Mint -- a rare opportunity to see "history in the making."

Since the ceremonies, mementos of the event have been displayed at numerous major coin shows throughout the United States. As the exhibit has been featured since last summer, Don recently thought about the best way to preserve this material, which could never be duplicated. Then the idea occurred to him to have everything framed in a patriotic (red, white & blue) theme, which was then coupled with gold and silver. That's exactly what he proceeded to do just prior to the February Long Beach Expo.

Having contacted a professional framer here in California, Don and the principals of the firm discussed the many alternatives of highlighting the documentation. It was finally agreed to triple mat each piece and set the material against a deep blue background. The resulting montage was framed in white birch and measured 4' x 5' upon completion.

The items pictured were as follows (see picture reading left to right): black & white glossies of Treasurer of the United States, Katherine D. Ortega; Secretary of the Treasury, James A. Baker III; and Director of the United States Mint, Donna Pope; with their applicable biographies directly below each notable's photo. Interspersed were the souvenir copy of the Constitution, which was embellished with a quill and reproductions of the silver dollar and $5 gold, and, below that, Don's personalized name tag and official Bicentennial pins. Underneath the formal invitation to the ceremonies with accompanying envelope was a Constitution dollar in its original holder together with a Certificate of Authenticity. In the bottom row was placed a black & white glossy of the obverse and reverse designs of the dollar with a tricornered embossed napkin bearing the dollar decal positioned below the picture. Next to that was a brochure of the Philadelphia Mint and a first-day cover dated September 17, 1987, honoring the Bicentennial of the Constitution. Under

the Secretary of the Treasury's biography was mounted the announcement that Mr. Baker would strike the first coin, and below that was a picture of former Editor of THE COMMEMORATIVE TRAIL, Ray Mercer, and Jan Mercer, his wife and 1986-1987 SUSCC Secretary, together with Don and myself. The official program, personally autographed by Donna Pope, Elizabeth Jones, and designers Patricia Verani and Marcel Jovine, was one of the highlights of all the documentation. Completing the display was a black & white glossy of the obverse and reverse designs of the $5 gold with a tricornered embossed napkin bearing the $5 gold decal positioned below the picture.

The pins and the first-day cover were the only items that were acquired after the ceremonies. Every other piece was either included in the official press kit furnished by the Mint or was a decoration at the place settings for the luncheon which followed the ceremonies.

To complete the work, a special wooden easel was constructed to display the framed documentation properly. Everything was considered -- even a detail as seemingly small as the "right" stand on which the frame should rest.

As an avid collector of documentation and related memorabilia relating to commemorative coins, I would occasionally glance at "Don's Masterpiece" (which it was, in my eyes!) during the course of the Long Beach Expo, where it was displayed for the first time since the framing was completed. I thought how wonderful it would have been if, when each of our commemorative coins were issued from 1892-1954, someone had cared enough to preserve similar items for historical purposes. I sincerely hope that Don's efforts do not go unnoticed and that collectors realize our modern links to numismatic history could well be lost forever if we fail to take steps to protect them for posterity.

FRANK VITTOR, PITTSBURGH SCULPTOR

Designer of the Gettysburg Commemorative Half Dollar

By Wayne K. Homren

Frank Vittor was a Pittsburgh sculptor whose works adorn buildings and public places throughout Western Pennsylvania. His numismatic fame was assured when he completed his design of the Gettysburg commemorative half dollar, issued in 1936. This article outlines the history of the artist and his coin. Several of Vittor's sculptures in the Pittsburgh area are described, for the benefit of native and visiting numismatists who may not be aware of their connection to the commemorative coin series.

The Artist Frank Vittor was born in 1888, in Mozzato, Italy, near Milan. His family included many artists, and by the age of nine young Frank had already begun sculpting. His formal art education took place in Milan and at Rodin's studio in Paris. In 1906 he came to the United States to be a student of Stanford White. The eighteen-year-old Vittor was left to fend for himself, when just a week after his arrival, White was murdered. Vittor eventually established himself in New York where he became an assistant teacher of sculpture classes at Cooper Union. It is said that he also worked several years for Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

In 1917 Vittor visited his wife's relatives in Pittsburgh, bringing with him over eighty of his bronze works for display in a local gallery. His work was immediately popular and several local art patrons, including famous scientist John Alfred Brashear, convinced Vittor to make Pittsburgh his home. In 1920 he moved to Pittsburgh and spent the rest of his life there, passing away in 1968.

Vittor taught sculpture at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon), the local YMHA and YWHA, and Carnegie Museum. He founded the Pittsburgh Society of Sculptors, and was a member of the Architectural Club of Pittsburgh and the city Planning Commission. He is known as the "Sculptor of Presidents" because of his busts of Coolidge, Wilson, and Theodore Roosevelt. In 1959 he sculpted the heads of all thirty-four presidents for a museum in Florida. In his lifetime he sculpted over two hundred other portrait busts in bronze [Gay 83].

Vittor's Pittsburgh Legacy Frank Vittor was one of Pittsburgh's most prolific sculptors. He left a legacy of over fifty memorials and fountains throughout the Pittsburgh area. Some of his more prominent works are described here.

Highway Art In the days when the automobile and public highways were still a relatively new phenomenon, it was not uncommon to adorn new roads with artworks. In 1922, Pittsburgh opened an improved roadway connecting downtown with Oakland, the cultural heart of the city. Dedicated on Armistice Day, the Boulevard of the Allies had at its Grant Street entrance two grand stone columns. Frank Vittor designed the columns, each surmounted by an American eagle perched atop a granite sphere. The eagles still stand guard for today's commuters.

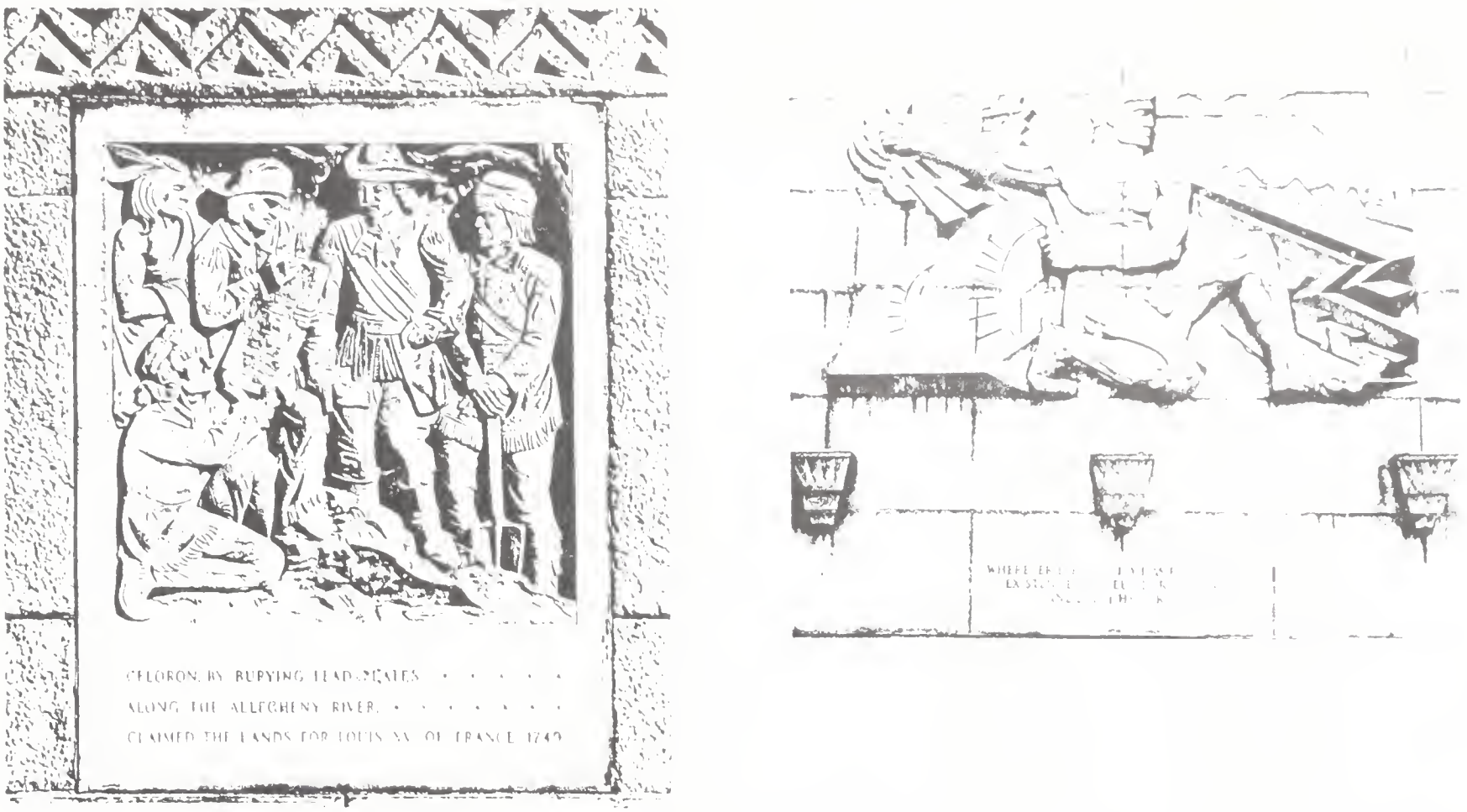

Figure 1: Vittor Highway Reliefs

In 1931, Frank Vittor designed granite reliefs for twelve massive directional pylons erected at the entrances of boulevards throughout Allegheny County. The reliefs depicted scenes of the early history of the local area. Only five pylons survive today. One is on Saw Mill Run Boulevard at Warrington Avenue (near the Liberty Tunnels). Two complete pairs of pylons still flank the Oakmont entrance to Allegheny River Boulevard and the Bellevue entrance to Ohio River Boulevard (see Figure 1, left).

Vittor's work also decorates the George Westinghouse Memorial Bridge, which carries Route 30 across the Turtle Creek Valley. At the time of its completion in 1934, this bridge was the longest reinforced concrete span in the U.S. Four ten by eighteen-foot granite reliefs adorn the pylons at the ends of the bridge. The subjects are transportation, electricity, steel, and pioneers of the Turtle Creek Valley (see Figure 1, right). "All the reliefs typify the Art Deco style in their massive, angular figures, jagged line, and streamlined, simplified forms. The lightning bolt motif, so strong in the twenties and thirties, is used effectively in *Electricity*. The stone in each relief is cut to a depth of eight inches, producing bold lines from the cast shadows.."([Gay 83], p347).

War Memorials After The Great War ended in Europe, Vittor found himself busied with many commissions for war memorials throughout the greater Pittsburgh area. One of the more notable of these is at Peabody High School on Highland Avenue in East Liberty. The memorial stands at the East Liberty Boulevard entrance, and once served as a base for a two-hundred-foot flagpole. The work was paid for by students and alumni of the school.

Dedicated in 1923, the work includes seven fourteen-foot figures representing "Columbia calling her sons to defend humanity and liberty. The answer is indicated by intrepid youth arming himself to answer her call. Then comes the pathetic departure, youth bidding mother a farewell as it leaves for war. Then comes the return of the victorious hero, a work showing the affection and esteem with which the youth is greeted. Then you see the crowning of youth by fame. The figure of grief shows the nation mourning for those who did not return" ([Gay 83], p282-283).

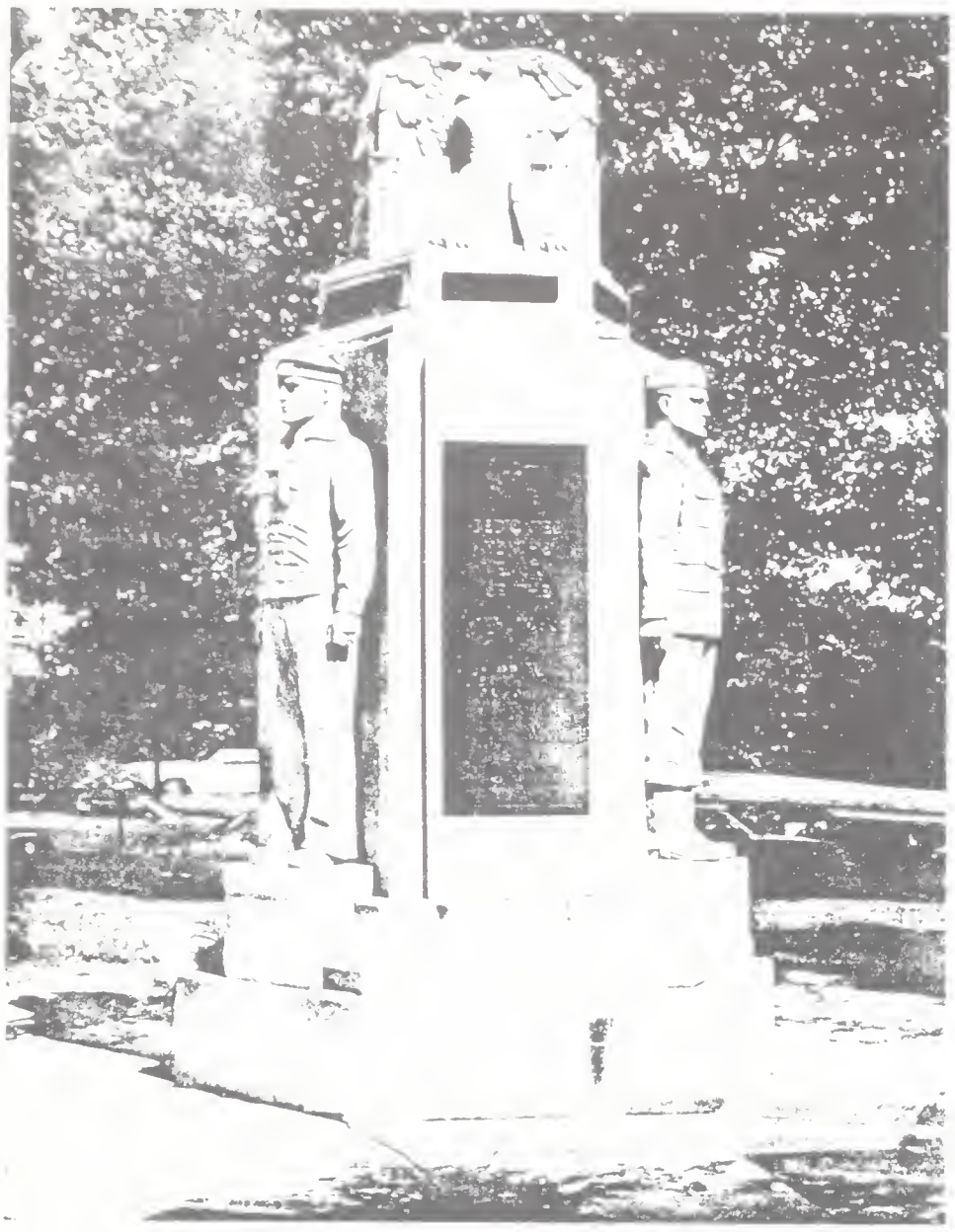

Figure 2: Vittor World War II Memorial

Other Vittor World War I memorials stand in Oakmont (Allegheny River Boulevard at Pennsylvania Avenue), and Braddock (Library Street near Braddock Avenue). The granite and bronze Herron Hill Park memorial stands at one of the highest points in Allegheny County.

Twenty years later the world was at war once again, and in 1949 Frank Vittor designed a World War II memorial for the 5,000 veterans from Pittsburgh's Eighth Ward. The eighteen-foot limestone memorial stands in Morrow Park, at the intersections of Baum Boulevard, Liberty and South Aiken Avenues (see Figure 2, at left).

Statues One of Frank Vittor's earliest Pittsburgh works was a statue of his friend John Brashear, completed in 1920. Brashear was an internationally known astronomer who built the University of Pittsburgh's Allegheny Observatory in Riverview Park on the North Side. The statue sits in the Observatory, over a crypt holding Brashear's ashes. The sculpture has an unusual rough texture, not unlike the work of Vittor's onetime teacher, Rodin.

In 1955, Vittor created a statue of Honus Wagner, the legendary shortstop for the Pittsburgh Pirates. "The Flying Dutchman" is often called the greatest shortstop in the history of baseball. The ten-foot bronze statue was installed at Forbes Field in Oakland and was later moved to the new Three Rivers Stadium on the North Side.

Near Phipps Conservatory in Oakland's Schenley Park stands a memorial to Christopher Columbus, designed by Vittor in 1958. A ten-foot bronze statue of Columbus stands atop a twenty-foot granite base.

One of Vittor's last works (1963) has two numismatic connections. His ten-foot bronze statue of Thomas Jefferson at Jefferson Memorial Park in the South Hills is surrounded by a circle of thirty-foot Corinthian columns saved after the demolition of the Bank of Pittsburgh building on Fourth Avenue, downtown. The Bank, founded in 1815, went out of business in 1931. The classical building was demolished in 1944, yet the facade stood on the site like ancient ruins for several years.

The president of the cemetery, when checking on Vittor's progress with the Jefferson statue, thought the face looked "too Roman." Another man pulled out a Jefferson nickel. "More like this," he said to Vittor, who soon altered the nose to suit ([Gay 83], p354-355).

Fountains, Plaques and Busts Not all of Vittor's public works were large. He designed thirty drinking fountains for Pittsburgh's urban parks. The small bronze fountains sported a delightful dolphin motif. Most have been lost, but one survivor stands at the Highland Avenue entrance of Highland Park.

The Allegheny County Courthouse on Grant Street is adorned with two plaques designed by Frank Vittor. The Jacob M. Gusky plaque, dedicated in 1935, honors the businessman who opened Pittsburgh's first department store (just after the Civil War). Another plaque honors Captain William B. Rogers, a colorful riverman who pioneered major developments in the area's waterways, including raising Allegheny River bridges to better accomodate river traffic.

A 1931 bronze tablet by Vittor commemorates two broadcasting firsts. The world's first commercial radio station was KDKA, in Pittsburgh. The station began broadcasting in 1920 [Lorant 75]. On Christmas Sunday evening 1922, the station broadcast a sermon from the Shadyside Presbyterian Church. The broadcast was recieved in the arctic regions by men of Hudson's Bay Company. On Easter Sunday morning 1929, a church service broadcast was recieved by Admiral Byrd's Expedition in Antarctica. The commemorative tablet is in the church on Westminster Place in Shadyside.

The current studios of KDKA are in Gateway Center, downtown. A life-size bronze bust of Marconi by Frank Vittor stands in the lobby. It commemorates the first transatlantic wireless message, sent by radio inventor Guglielmo Marconi in 1901. The bust was dedicated in 1952.

Proposed Momumental Works Vittor conceived several works on a monumental scale that for one reason or another, never came into being. In 1932 he created a plaster model of George Washington as a young surveyor. A one-hundred-foot, floodlit statue was to be erected atop Mount Washington, overlooking downtown Pittsburgh. The model is now lost.

In 1951 Vittor submitted a design for a one-hundred-foot statue for Pittsburgh's Point State Park. The statue depicted Joe Magarac, the allegorical steelworker. The design was rejected, but Vittor's three-foot plaster model is now displayed at the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society in Oakland.

The Gettysburg Half Dollar An issue of up to fifty thousand half dollars commemorating the Battle of Gettysburg was permitted in an authorizing Act of Congress on June 16, 1936. The half dollar was to commemorate the approaching seventy-fifth anniversary of the bloody 1863 Civil War battle. Specifically, the issue was coined for the Blue and Gray Reunion of July 1-3 1938, where Civil War veterans of both the North and South met to reminisce. The inscription "* BLUE . AND . GRAY . REUNION *" appears on the lower obverse border.

One of the most crucial episodes in that historic conflict, the battle is known as "the high-water mark of the Confederacy." General Hooker commanded the Union Army of the Potomac against General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, as Lee attempted an invasion of the North. The fighting on July 1-3 1863 left some 18,000 Union soldiers and 23,000 Confederates killed or wounded.

One of the first descriptions of the coin's design appeared in the November 1936 issue of *The Numismatist*. The article quoted Paul L. Roy, executive secretary of the Pennsylvania State Commission in charge of the commemorative.

Acknowledgements The author would like to thank the members of Western PAN; this research was inspired by conversations held during a monthly meeting. *Discovering Pittsburgh's Sculpture* was an invaluable reference book; All sculpture photo credits go to Vernon Gay.

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Epilogue *A Guide Book of United States Coins*, more commonly known as "The Red Book", gives this sixty-nine word description of the Gettysburg commemorative half dollar:

> On June 16, 1936 Congress authorized a coinage of fifty-cent pieces in commemoration of the Battle of Gettysburg. The models were prepared by Frank Vittor, a Philadelphia sculptor. Portraits of a Union and Confederate veteran are shown on the obverse. Two shields representing the Union and Confederate armies separated by a double-bladed fasces are on the reverse.([Yeoman 87], p216)

The wording of this entry has been unchanged since the first edition. It is incorrect of course, since Vittor was a PITTSBURGH sculptor. After reviewing a draft of this paper, Ken Bressett, editor of the "Red Book" agreed to correct the oversight in the next edition.

Wayne Homren, a native of Pittsburgh, has a degree in Computer Science, from the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Michigan. Works for the Carnegie Group, a computer soft ware company. Collects money of the Civil War, Civil War tokens and encased postage stamps. Member of TAMS, ANA, PAN, SPMC, Civil War Token Society, Early American Coppers Society and currently Secretary of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society.

New Members since September 1987:

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Jarrod Clark
Frank J. Albanese
Seth W. Chandler
Christopher Beck
Andrew Jaciw
David P. Fame
Tom Lambert
Beth T. Rosenblum
Neil C. Watson

Regular Members

Talmage V. Burke
Scott Tilson
Ernest Bruns
William R. Kellen
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Wayne Messick
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Louise Loomis
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Douglas P. Hanke
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G.H. Sweat
Leah Klein
Steven J. Ryan
Kathleen E. Levine
Melvin N. Memering
Paul Y. Lin
Paul Raimondo
Edward J. Rosenblum
William C. Brown
Wayne Wong
Leo F. Whaley
Charles J. O'Brien III
Lance O. Lollini
Dr. William H. Tucker
Charles T. Peal
Glenn T. Curry
Andrew M. Gause
Don Hawk
Harold G. Vincent
Robert L. Mushen
Susan J. Wilder
Henry W. Schillinger
Joseph M. Arceri
Frank C. Barone, Jr.
William L. Bristol
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Milton Lowy
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George D. Schultheis, Jr.
David M. Bartlett
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Douglas Harding
Walter H. Perkins
Tim Dumm
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Mark E. Jones
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Saverio Porcelli
Denny White
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C.C. Price
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Jeffrey F. Biddle
Steven Cooley
Jesse Feliciani
Marvin Zukor
Leonard Johnson
Alexander Heard
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Terry Kaplan
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Michael M. Gilbert
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Kevin G. Holmes
Diane R. Wolf
Gary L. Whitt
Dan Jenkins
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Joseph A. Dych
David A. King
Robert A. Vallone
Al Lasiw

Joe N. Tipton
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Walter L. Guertin
Herbert C. Hess
John E. McEntee
Charles D. Hargitt
George M. Smurawski
Walter L. Zoeller
Les Friesen
Don P. Wood
Jack M. Brownrigg
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Jack Gatewood
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Lolly Rickert
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Thomas A. King
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Robert A. Maddox
Robert T. Vassar
H. E. Lacey
Gary Koch
Craig M. Frey
David Huff
Clay Johns
Norman J. Sasek
Fred Scharlott
Gerard M. Lepouttre
James W. Burmeister

ANA MIDWINTER CONVENTION

By Helen L. Carmody (R-7, CA)

Suppose you gave a party and nobody came. That's how a majority of the dealers felt who participated in the bourse at the ANA Midwinter Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, March 11-13, 1988. Imagine ideal facilities for the bourse, exhibits, meetings, viewing of auction lots, and even registration and photo i.d. The $65.00 rate at the Excelsior was very appealing (in contrast to most other convention host hotels), and no complaints were voiced regarding either the food or service. There was even complimentary shuttle service from and to the airport. Throughout the show ads on local television stations announced the presence of the convention, and one could only expect that area collectors and their families would schedule at least one day to attend the well-publicized event. All the elements for a successful show were in place.

However, although no one expected "hordes" of people interested in numismatics to converge upon this last ANA Midwinter (I was informed that the per-capita annual income is $11,000.00), only 3,311 people registered for the show, and the bulk of that number consisted of dealers, exhibitors, members of the numismatic press, and others working on various aspects of the convention.

Although it was reported in recent press coverage that the show "was a tremendous success," those of us who were there to transact business were definitely of the opinion that local collectors did not turn out "in force" (as also reported) at <u>any</u> time during the show. It is true that there were collectors present, but it was our feeling that a great percentage of those were collectors from other parts of the country. Moreover, as we sat at our table, taking a respite from perusing other dealers' offerings, we noted that many, many usually familiar faces at ANA Conventions were missing from this particular show. One would surmise that Little Rock didn't hold much appeal for the average hobbyist to take time away from work and pay for a round-trip airline ticket -- which, considering the distance, was high in comparison with flights to Orlando and Long Beach, where, almost routinely, extremely successful shows are held. We realize the ANA attempts to locate its shows in various parts of the country in order to afford <u>all</u> collectors an opportunity to attend a major convention without traveling to a major-market area. Unfortunately, in our opinion, Little Rock (despite all its plusses) couldn't overcome the fact that the area is not a site to attract enough collectors to assure a financially successful show.

I surveyed the bourse dealers in an attempt to give Society members a more objective opinion of the activity, and the terms used were "disastrous," "poor," "fair," and "good." However, most dealers were speaking strictly about wholesale business. All too often I heard the statement, "If I can't 'sell' my way out of the show, I'll 'buy' my way out." Even that was difficult unless coins desired by regular customers were available. At first the originally announced bourse hours were considered too short, and the opening on Saturday was changed from noon to 10 a.m. Yet by the time Sunday rolled around, it was obvious that nearly everyone in attendance had done all he could possibly do, and the last four hours on Sunday (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) were devoted to totaling wholesale invoices and delivering and picking up checks to and from other dealers. By noon, in contrast to ANA policy, a great number of dealers had left, not waiting until the permitted departure time of 2 p.m.

The opinions enumerated above were basically expressing the entire area of numismatics. Some dealers reported buying and selling a limited number of commemoratives, but, again, "fresh" material was almost impossible to locate. One small lot of quality coins did appear, which immediately turned hands from one East Coast dealer to another. I examined seven pieces (which may or may not have been the entire lot) and found them to be very desirable in every respect. Unfortunately, the attached premium in excess of what I personally could pay was a bit high without knowing whether they would be immediately sold or not, and I had to pass on the deal, which another dealer was already considering at that time. Fortunately (for him!), he felt he could "stretch" a bit more than I, and he purchased the lot soon after I had the opportunity to view the coins. In another instance there was a magnificently toned example that was priced in excess of three times CDN MS-65 bid. Much to my dismay, there was also no way to inventory that piece! The way the show was going from a retail point of view, the most inquiries we received were regarding the prices of a silver round and silver bar we had in one corner of our case -- items in the $20.00 range seemed most appealing to those who stopped at our table!

The show wasn't a total loss. The convention medal, featuring a design based on the Arkansas commemorative half, was almost an immediate sellout. The 400-mintage item became an "instant collectible" by Friday morning! Many of us also had the opportunity to try "The Best Yogurt in the Country," and the store's stand was a welcome addition to the bourse floor; we were only sorry that it wasn't open for business on Sunday! Then too, we at least had an opportunity to see old friends without taking time away from business,

and getting away from our table for over two hours during the day certainly didn't fill me with anxiety of "losing business" while attending a meeting for volunteer ANA workers! There were also two notable additions to my commemorative documentation collection: Connecticut boxes of the "pull-out" variety, one in gray and the other in red, both bearing "HARTFORD-CONNECTICUT TRUST COMPANY."

Twenty-two to twenty-five persons were present at the Society meeting on Saturday morning, and, considering the total attendance at the convention, that figure was excellent. President, Bob Colby, personally welcomed two gentlemen who were not familiar to him. One, however, was a Society member of long standing from Tennessee. The other was a visitor, who was curious about our organization but did not collect commemoratives nor, for that matter, had any interest in the series or coins in general. This gentleman stopped me twice -- immediately after the meeting and again on the bourse floor -- to advise me how very much he enjoyed the meeting, so perhaps we provided the necessary "spark" to ignite a new collector. Mike Fuljenz led off the meeting by discussing numerous "hoards," i.e., Hawaiian, Iowa, San Diego, Vancouver, etc. I followed with a talk on original holders and other related commemorative documentation and memorabilia. It was then requested that anyone who had not as yet paid his dues for Club Year 1987-88 could do so immediately, and a concentrated effort was further made canvassing the bourse floor. Many members assisted greatly by paying their 1988-89 dues as well! The meeting closed approximately 10:20 a.m. with the invitation extended to everyone to join us at our Central States Meeting, at which Ray Mercer will be the featured speaker.

Needless to say, this convention was not the ideal show at which to recruit new members: One collector from Missouri did join, and another prospective member from Texas said he would send his completed application directly to our Secretary, Cindy Mohon. Fortunately, attempts to recruit members have been quite successful in past months though, and elsewhere in this issue of TCT you will see a listing of members' efforts in this regard. Why don't you recruit a new member today?

CENTRAL STATES NUMISMATIC SOCIETY CONVENTION

By Helen L. Carmody (R-7, CA)

Central States is heralded as a collector's show, and anyone viewing the activity in Indianapolis April 7-10, 1988, would have to agree. Although some participants (both collectors and dealers) were still "a little weak in the knees" from flying into the city during 80 m.p.h. winds (which caused the eventual closing of the tower and some flights' being diverted), everyone agreed that the brisk business conducted on PNG Day made up for the apprehension they suffered in getting to the show.

Officials at the registration desk indicated that 1,500 dealers and assistants were present, and total attendance had climbed to 6,000 by Sunday. A definite plus for this show is the group of people who are responsible for its operation. From personal observations I noted that, whenever I was in the area to see a representative of the Society performing his or her various services, each attendee was treated warmly and was made to feel sincerely welcome. A true sense of amiability pervaded the atmosphere, which imparted the necessary impetus to scout the vast bourse floor and "pound the concrete pavement" searching for material. That attitude is what sets apart a "good" show -- whatever market conditions exist.

In going up and down each aisle, business appeared to be very strong at times and at others seemed to ease off a bit, but that is essentially true of all shows. We took particular care to examine each dealer's offerings with respect to commemoratives. We noted two Texas PDS sets at different tables that had great eye appeal and would make lovely additions to anyone's collection. However, these sets were not "sheet" coins and exceeded current price guides by approximately 30+%. A superior Stone Mountain was on sale for $2,500.00. A gem Isabella quarter was on display but not for sale and was reported to have been sold earlier at almost double MS-65 CDN "bid." An MS-66 Antietam was being offered at double MS-65 CDN "ask," indicating that what we tend to call "plus" examples of this issue (sometimes regarded as overrated when compared to other commemoratives in terms of availability in MS-65) still command a high premium because of the popularity of its design and the fact that it is usually collected as part of a Civil War "mini-set" by hobbyists who may not even have interest in other issues. All of the mentioned specimens had original toning, which made them particularly appealing to "color" enthusiasts. However, a lustrous untoned MS-65 Lexington traded dealer-to-dealer at $2,200.00. Hopefully, these examples will give you some perception of why your local coin shop owner, who travels to major shows to acquire inventory,

is experiencing difficulty in filling your want lists at close to published price guides.

By careful attention and thorough searching, however, a few "good buys" could be made but not without a lot of effort and work. Thanks to large coin shows and the vast variety of material presented, you can locate some pieces that may fit into your collection. The most important advice for anyone is to evaluate many specimens of the same issue and be "armed" with pertinent, basic information concerning that particular coin. You may know something that a dealer may not!

The auction by McIntire Numismatic Auctions, Inc., was said to come very close to realizing the firm's expectations, and many first-time bidders were present at all sessions.

The Society meeting was conducted by Newsletter Editor, Anthony Swiatek, who graciously substituted for scheduled speaker, Ray Mercer, who was unable to attend the convention due to illness. A slide presentation on various commemoratives was preceded by a question-and-answer session for the twenty-five attendees. Secretary, Cindy Mohon, and Publicity Chairperson, Bob Ball, joined Anthony Swiatek, Don Carmody, and myself in the discussion of "laser-type" and professional grading services. A request was made that members pay their 1988-89 dues as soon as possible.

This is an attempt to reduce the excessive workload on the Secretary during August, when dues are "officially" payable. Additionally, candidates for the office of Secretary, which is a position vital to the operation of the Society, were implored to contact any of the officers immediately, as Cindy will be unable to continue in that capacity due to other commitments. Anyone -- male or female -- who has some computer expertise and an aptitude for details and record keeping would be an ideal candidate. Without a competent individual to do this all-important job, the Society will suffer irreparably. New members were recruited at the show, and delinquent, as well as 1988-89, dues were collected by canvassing the bourse floor.

Our next Society meeting will be held at the Long Beach Expo on Saturday, June 4, 1988, at 9 a.m. An open forum panel, consisting of Tom Best, Helen and Don Carmody, Sam Lopresto, and Anthony Swiatek, will be chaired by Ray Mercer. We look forward to another record-breaking attendance!

D O N A T I O N S

MONEY	R-#	Amount
William Stein	R-1290	10.00
Vernon L. Tipka	R-1003	5.00
William H. Sudbrink	R-64	10.00
Jim Whelan	R-945	100.00
Lyndon King Jr., M.D.	R-84	50.00
Peter J. Wesp	R-626	5.00
Douglas Eagan	R-115	15.00
Robert J. Fleishman	R-611	50.00
Charles J. Ricard	R-80	5.00
Gordon Paul Owens	R-350	70.00
Jack Provost	R-991	10.00
David K.S. Garrett	R-565	65.00
Bob Ball		100.00
	Total	505.00
		======

LIBRARY MATERIAL

Phil Rosso, R-351, Book: Silver and Gold Commemorative Coins - By: A. Swiatek and W. Breen - Autographed.

TO BE AUCTIONED AT OUR ANA MEETING IN JULY, 1988

Peter L. Shaffer, R-752,	Original Antietam Holder "Cut Down at one time."
Mike Fuljenz, R-2,	3-Little Rock ANA Convention Badge/Medals Est. Value $20.00 each.
Helen & Don Carmody, R-7, R-8:	1-Press Kit, Constitution Coin First Strike Ceremony.
Helen & Don Carmody, R-7, R-8:	1 Press Kit, Olympic Coin First-Strike Ceremony.
Tom Culhane	Lead paper weight, Liberty Bell from the 1926 Sesqui-Centennial.

* * * N E W M E M B E R S * * *

Sponsor's Name	R-#	# Sponsored
Misc. Advertisements	-	49
Helen and Don Carmody	R-7; R-8	43
Jan and Ray Mercer	R-538; R-20	28
Cindy Mohon	R-706	27
Bob Wilhite	R-264	12
Paul Green - H.& D. Carmody	R-7; R-8	8
Bob Colby	R-94	4
Jack Ehrmentraut	R-254	3
Dick Pandolfo	LM-11	2
Michael Garafalo	LM-23	2
Anthony Swiatek	R-4	1

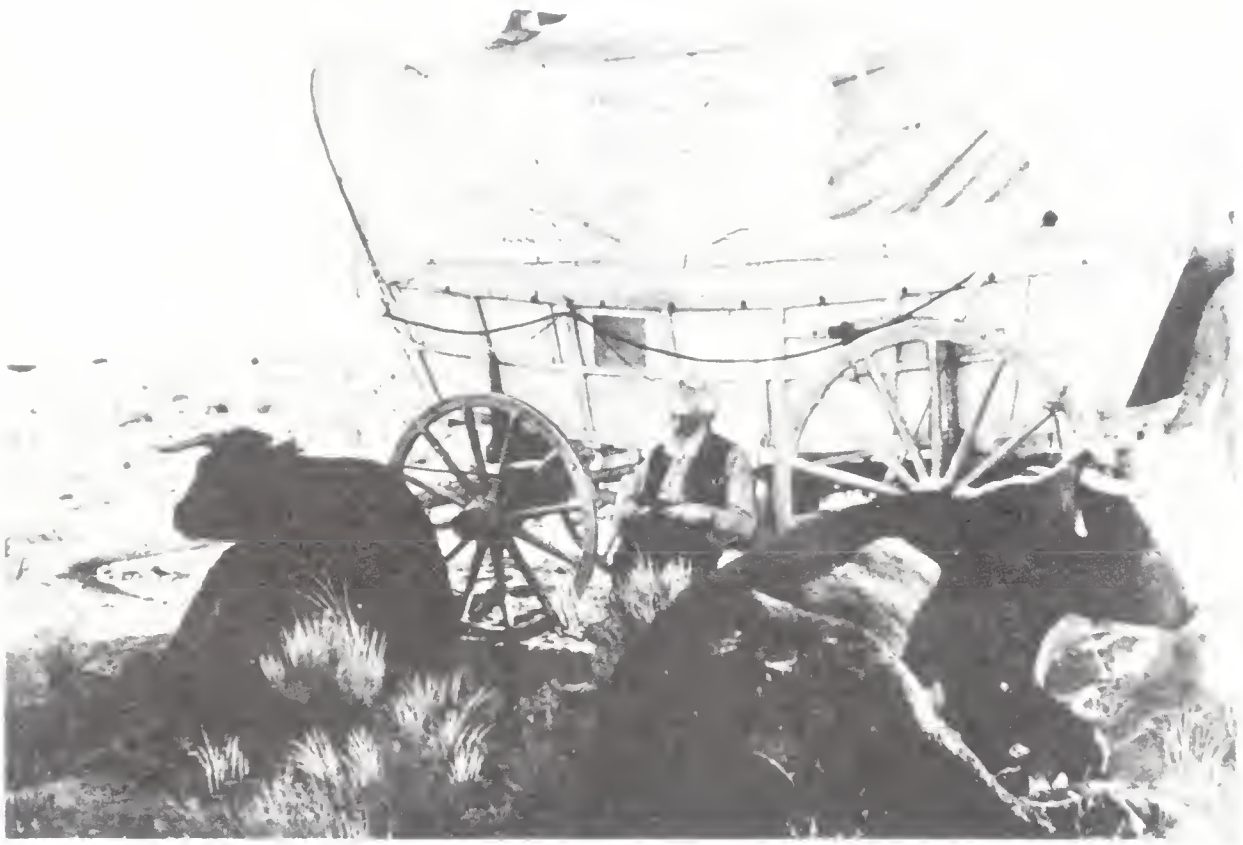
Les Watson	R-1550	1
Jay Spencer	R-1454	1
Irving Kam	R-165	1
Steven SZenay	R-807	1
Michael Gilbert	R-351	1
Thomas Dorsa	LM-3	1
Edward Bisker	R-1090	1
Rodger Bridwell	R-1389	1
James Halfon	R-190	1
Steven Lowenstein	R-1395	1
Charles Ricard	R-80	1
Paul Owens- H & D Carmody	R-350; R-7; R-8	1
Ed Rosenblum- H & D Carmody	R-1476; R-7; R-8	1
Bill Shamhart- H & D Carmody	R-33; R-7; R-8	1
Lee Watson	R-1550	1
Patrick Colbert Jr.	R-1058	1
Martin Kovar	R-1431	1
Brad Karoleff	R-364	1
Roger & Lonnie Cazin & Carmody	R-855; R-454; R-7; R-8	1
	T o t a l	198

A JOURNEY ALONG THE TRAIL

By: Anthony Swiatek

Greetings, Commem Society Members! This is not Ray Mercer or Dr. Bob Colby you are looking at. Unfortunately, I am not Jan Mercer's grandfather. I'm Ezra Meeker!Here are some interesting facts about myself: I came upon this earthly plane on December 29, 1830; migrated to the Oregon country, summer of 1852; was a farmer and father of the hop industry of Washington Territory (now a State); a pioneer in Exporting Pacific Coast hops; spent four winter in London; and five years in searching out and recovering the lost Oregon Trail; always lived in the open air; never drank intoxicants nor experienced a rheumatic pain. I was never sick in bed for sixty years! Why? One additional reasons stems from the fact that coins were never purchased from promotors who claimed my investment will increase tenfold within the long term (ha,ha!) of two years!

As you may be aware, the Oregon Trail, about 2,000 miles long, extended from the Missouri River in Missouri, northwest to the Columbia River in Oregon. It was much used by westward migrants around 1840-1860. Permit me now to take all SUSCC members on a partial tour along the Trail and elsewhere.



The year is 1906. Location is the Plains, near Wells Spring, Oregon. No, I am not looking at the finest known 1870-CC Liberty $20 gold piece! Just busy writing my previous day's journal, at noon. Did I hear someone ask if my wagon is fully struck?

SUSCC Members! My wagon is seen here in the "Big Apple," eighty one years ago (1907), at Broad Street, near Wall Street. Business was

suspended, a speech called for and loudly acclaimed by the brokers and the multitude! This is one of those places which was harder to get out of than to get into. However, with the help of two policemen, a way was opened, after I sang "Happy Trails To You..." Well...!
By the way, your editor's wife, Gloria, was working for the Bank of New York, in 1977. Her office was located diagonally across the street from the Wagon! How about that!

Back in 1907, President Roosevelt is seen viewing my Team. No one on the whole trip showed a livelier interest in the effort to monument the Oregon Trail, that did Mr. Roosevelt. He recommended an appropriation by Congress to complete the work.
Yes, it would have been great to receive an Ultra High Relief $20 gold specimen or any commem from the President! My, doesn't that Secret Service agent on the left look like Booker T. Washington?

(Photo - previous page) The year is 1908. We are on the drive from St. Louis to Jefferson City, Missouri. Makes me wonder if these boys believe they are watching Frank DuVall attempting to locate the finest known MS-67 OX?

We are looking at the Oregon Trail, near Thirty-Two Mile Creek Crossing, Nebraska. Note the two parallel trails in this view and how they come together on the ascending ground. These Trails were four feet deep on the lower levels and near seven on the upper stretch.

(Photo - previous page)
No metamorphosis here, Society members! They were not transformed into Buffalo nickels. Once so vast in number, but now extinct on the Plains, this illustration will revive the memories of Pioneers of what was so often seen and quite too often dreaded in the wild stampedes led by just such fellows as here illustrated.
Anthony, ask the membership if HOBO nickels are legal tender?

Are we observing an outdoor commemorative society lecture or the opening of a time capsule, in quest of a commem? Actually, you are seeing me addressing a group of pioneers in Nebraska, back in 1910. They were being informed of the fact that few of the graves on the Plains were preserved. A sympathetic pioneer settlement of a later date have cared for this one, although the history of it comes down as a legend, -in fact lost.

CONDUCTING TO THE THEME OF FERNANDO?

(Photo - previous page) It might look that way to some. However, you see me here with Jim, pictured on a street in Terre Haute, Indiana, back in 1910.

This faithful dog -saying hello to Commem Trail readers on page 26 of the last issue (Vol. 4, #2)- was with the expedition from the start. Jim had more adventures than any other dog living. He was run over by a trolley car, then again by a heavily loaded truck where the other dog was killed that he was fighting and he nearly so; then hooked over the fence by an irate cow; thrown over a sage brush; then again kicked into the air by a vicious horse and then again tackled by a wolf and finally lost in New York City for three days. (Editor's note: I'm glad this dog was not named LUCKY!) Yet he was ever ready to stand guard over the wagon, never willing to ride, while the team was in motion; a great dog, indeed!

Also note this remarkable nice view, one of many hundreds taken which shows the fine details of the wagon, better than usual, even to the linch pin, if the reader will look closely; the famous hub (front wheel) that did service across the Plains 58 years ago is here seen set "sound as a dollar."

Does the man with the black hat, seen above my raised right hand, resemble Charles Ricard?

Warmly,
Ezra

Hope all you readers enjoyed our journey along the trail. Well, that's all folks!

AS